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Statement of Representative Christopher Shays September 15, 2006

Today we convene for the final day of our three day hearing *Iraq: Democracy or Civil War?*, examining security force levels; prospects for national reconciliation; and the consequences of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

The conflict in Iraq finds US and Coalition forces up against increasing insurgent, sectarian, and terrorist violence.

Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, a supporter of the United States objective to foster progressive democracy in the Middle East, bluntly stated, "It is now obvious that we are not midwifing democracy in Iraq. We are baby-sitting a civil war."

While some may take issue with Mr. Friedman's choice of words, the broad contours of his point are clear—the violence in Iraq continues, if not increases, the new Iraqi leadership has not yet shown the political will to confront it, and efforts to promote peace and democracy are stalled.

Our witnesses this past Monday came to different conclusions about security in Iraq, but one thing was clear from their testimony: our current baseline for overall security forces is inadequate. We do not have enough Coalition forces in Iraq.

In addition it is clear to me, based on my fourteen visits to Iraq and all our hearings, the 325,500 projected Iraqi Security Force level to be reached in December of this year will be inadequate, and not allow us to bring most of our troops home.

At our second session this past Wednesday, officials from the Department of State and US Agency for International Development, and a panel of distinguished Iraqis testified on the prospects, timing and conditions for achieving national reconciliation and a permanent constitution.

Ambassador David Satterfield, Senior Advisor on Iraq to the Secretary of State, told us that quashing militia violence is a priority, but that all of the tough decisions currently facing Iraqis—standing down militias, sharing the oil wealth, federalism, and the rollback of de-Baathification—are parts of the solution. He concluded that a grand bargain incorporating all of the parts would be required to achieve lasting reconciliation.

Our second panel on Wednesday, comprised of Dr. Hajim Al-Hasani, former Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and currently a Sunni Member of Parliament; Mr. Karim Al-Musawi, Washington Representative of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; and Mr. Qubad Talibany, Washington Representative of the Kurdish Regional Government and son of Iraq's President, Jalal Talabany, identified what they saw as key mistakes that have led to the sectarian violence in Iraq:

- Permitting the looting that followed the US invasion;
- Allowing Iraqis to divide and identify by distinct groups;
- Inadequate vetting of new volunteers for the new Iraqi Security Forces, especially the national police, leading to corruption within the ranks;
- Dissolving Iraqi Security Forces, and not subsequently reconstituting them more quickly;

- Creating a political vacuum by not having a provisional government prepared to take over when Hussein's government dissolved; and
- Devoting insufficient attention to economic development.

We begin today by continuing the national reconciliation discussion with our second panel from Wednesday.

Following the conclusion of this panel, we will hear testimony from today's panel discussing the consequences of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

For all the talk of US withdrawal, serious consideration of the consequences of leaving Iraq has received relatively little attention.

The Administration has made clear its view that the consequences of leaving Iraq prematurely would be disastrous. It believes removing US forces before Iraqis can defend themselves would abandon the Iraqi people to an environment of death and uncertainty, destabilize the Middle East, embolden terrorists around the globe, and leave the world a more dangerous place for generations to come.

I believe leaving Iraq prematurely would result in a full scale civil war, Islamist terrorists winning a huge victory, and Iran being the dominant power where two-thirds of the world's energy resides. That is my opinion. And this is why we are having our hearing today: What will be the consequences of leaving Iraq, whenever we leave it?

I struggle with the fact that since we invaded Iraq, and dissolved their entire security force, I believe it would be immoral to leave Iraq before we replace those security forces.

I also struggle with the fact that President Bush said, "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." But the fact is this has not happened. As of August 30, 2006 there were 294,000 trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces and yet no Coalition Forces have stepped down.

Debate will become more pronounced in the coming weeks and months over when the United States can drawdown forces in Iraq. Engaging in serious debate is healthy: it is exactly the sort of dialogue our country needs to be having about Iraq right now.

But this debate should be informed by serious consideration of the impact of our leaving Iraq, not by partisan politics.

We will hear testimony on this topic today from Dr. Fouad Ajami, Director of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies; Dr. James Fearon, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and an expert on ethnic conflict and civil war; and Ambassador Peter Galbraith, Senior Diplomatic Fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

We thank all of our witness for sharing their perspectives with us today, and hope that this hearing will help illuminate the consequences of the paths our nation may choose in Iraq.

Iraq's future—and our own—hangs in the balance.